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ABSTRACT

The America Reads Project is a program that trains San Francisco State University (SFSU) undergraduates to serve as tutors in local elementary schools. This paper focuses on the findings from the 3rd year of the project (1999-2000). For the 3rd year, 55 undergraduates were trained in a 3-unit course. Eleven elementary schools participated in 1999-2000. Roughly 165 children received tutoring. The undergraduate tutors, teachers, and principals were asked to evaluate various aspects of the program. Overall, their opinions were quite favorable. No statistically significant differences were found on any items on this attitudinal measure. Reading performance was assessed using several measures. For all passages, a statistically significant increase was found in the percentage of children who were at "instructional level" from the beginning to the end of school year. Second, word recognition was measured using the San Diego Word Recognition Test. For the first through seventh grade, a statistically significant increase was found in the percentage of children identified as being at instructional level from the beginning to the end of the school year. Finally, performance on the Stanford Achievement Test (STAR-9) was analyzed in terms of Total Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary, and Spelling. No statistically significant differences were found from the end of 2nd grade to end of 3rd grade on any of these measures. In summary, the key stakeholders were generally quite positive towards the project, and most undergraduates indicated that America Reads was a valuable service learning experience. In terms of the tutees' reading performance, statistically significant increases were found on the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory and the San Diego Word Recognition Test. No significant differences were found on any of the STAR-9 subscales. (Contains 6 notes and 12 tables of data.) (RS)

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The America Reads Project: A Study of a School-University Tutoring Program

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the California Educational Research Conference, South Lake Tahoe, California, November 2001

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Abstract

The America Reads Project is a program that trains San Francisco State University (SFSU) undergraduates to serve as tutors in local elementary schools. The project has several goals, including: (a) to positively impact tutees' reading; (b) to provide undergraduates with a positive service learning experience in the field of education; (c) to increase undergraduates' awareness of the realities of teaching and their interest in entering the teaching profession; and (d) achievement to positively impact tutees' attitudes towards reading;. The project is now in its 5th year. For the first three years, the project was supported by federal grant money from the Corporation for National Service. Part of this grant money paid for a systematic evaluation of the project. In this paper, the program evaluation findings will be presented. This paper focuses on the findings from the 3rd year of the project (1999-2000). We decided to focus on the 3rd year because we considered it to be the best in terms of the delivery of the program, and the quality of the data. For the 3rd year, 55 undergraduates were trained in a 3-unit course. Each undergraduate tutored 3 third-grade children, and each child was tutored on a tri-weekly basis. The tutoring sessions were one-to-one and were 45 minutes long. Eleven elementary schools participated in 1999-2000. Each school had a teacher from that school who served as the coordinator at that site. Roughly 165 children received tutoring. The undergraduate tutors, teachers, and principals were asked to evaluate various aspects of the program. Overall, their opinions were quite favorable. In terms of outcome data, the children's attitudes towards reading were assessed at the beginning and end of the school year. No statistically significant differences were found on any items on this attitudinal measure. Reading performance was assessed using several measures. First, reading comprehension was measured using the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory. Four passages were used—two 2nd grade passages and two 3rd grade passages. The children were given these passages to read at the beginning and end of the academic year, and their comprehension was assessed. For all four passages, a statistically significant increase was found in the percentage of children who were at "instructional level" from the beginning to the end of school year. Second, word recognition was measured using the San Diego Word Recognition Test. This test consists of 8 sets of 10-word lists. Each list corresponds to a grade level, starting with a primer list, and ending with a seventh grade list. For each list, a child is considered at "instructional level" if he or she correctly identifies 80% or more of the words in a given list. For the first through seventh grade lists, a statistically significant increase was found in the percentage of children identified as being at instructional level from the beginning to the end of the school year. Finally, performance on the Stanford Achievement Test (STAR-9) was analyzed in terms of Total Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary, and Spelling. No statistically significant differences were found from the end of 2nd grade to end of 3rd grade on any of these measures. In summary, the key stakeholders were generally quite positive towards the project, and most undergraduates indicated that America Reads was a valuable service learning experience. In terms of the tutees' reading performance, statistically significant increases were found on the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory and the San Diego Word Recognition Test. No significant differences were found on any of the STAR-9 subscales.

The America Reads Project: A Study of a School-University Tutoring Program

The America Reads Project is a program that trains San Francisco State University undergraduates to serve as tutors in local elementary schools. The undergraduates enroll in a course at SFSU where they receive tutor training. Each undergraduate is assigned three third-grade children to tutor in reading, and each child is tutored for an entire academic year.

The America Reads Project is now in its fifth year. For the first three years (academic years 1997-1998, 1998-1999, and 1999-2000) the project was supported by federal grant money from the Coroporation for National Service. Part of this grant money paid for a systematic evaluation of the project. In this paper, the findings from the program evaluation will be presented.

This paper will focus on the evaluation findings from the third year of the project. There are two reasons for this focus on the third-year results. First, by the third year of the project, the program was past its initial implementation phase, and the design of the program had stabilized. Thus, the evaluation results for the third year would be most likely to portray the America Reads Project at its best. Second, some of the assessment data collected during the first two years had validity problems, either because of problems with some instruments themselves, or because of problems in the way the tests were administered. By the third year of the project, these assessment problems had been overcome. Thus, the third year of data was the "cleanest" year.

This paper is divided into four main sections. First, the America Reads Project will be described. Second, the impact of the program on the undergraduates and the undergraduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program will be considered. Third, the principals' and

teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program will be discussed. Finally, the impact of the program on the tutees' attitudes towards reading and reading achievement will be assessed

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Professor Rosemary Hurtado, a professor in the Department of Elementary Education, directs the America Reads Project at San Francisco State University (SFSU). For the 1999-2000 academic year, 55 SFSU students were recruited and trained to tutor low-achieving 3rd grade children in reading. The undergraduates were then placed in local elementary schools for the entire academic year to serve as tutors. Each SFSU student tutored 3 third-grade children, and each child was tutored on a tri-weekly basis. The tutoring sessions were one-to-one and were 45 minutes long.

The Elementary Schools

There were eleven elementary schools that participated in the America Reads Project during 1999-2000. Ten of these schools were in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), and one was in Daly City (which is part of the Jefferson Union School District). The schools were selected by America Reads Project SFSU faculty members based upon their prior work affiliations with these schools. Each of these elementary schools had a teacher from that school who served as the coordinator of the America Reads Project at that particular site. This coordinator was called a *site mentor* teacher, and was paid by the America Reads Project. In addition, each school was assigned a *team leader* who was a student at SFSU. These team leaders had previously served as tutors in the America Reads Project. There were twelve team leaders altogether. Their role was to provide support to the tutors and site mentor teachers and to conduct the testing.

Recruiting and Training the Tutors during Fall 1999

The project director recruited 55 SFSU students to serve as tutors. In terms of the criteria used to select these tutors, they had to be (a) eligible for work study stipends, and (b) Liberal Studies majors [1,2]. In the Fall of 1999, the tutors enrolled in a special section of a 3-unit undergraduate course offered by the Department of Elementary Education entitled *EED 646: Field Experience*.[3] This special section of the course was designed for this cohort of students. In this course, tutors received instruction in methods that addressed word identification, reading comprehension, and writing strategies. Students were also introduced to multicultural children's literature.

Two instructors, Professors Patricia Gallagher and Gloria Norton, both of whom are reading specialists in the Department of Elementary Education taught the course. In the Spring 2000, these tutors enrolled in a one-unit course, which met monthly at SFSU and which was taught by Professor Gallagher.

The Third-Grade Tutees

The third grade classroom teachers in the eleven America Reads Project schools nominated children in their classrooms who were having difficulty reading. Teachers were asked to nominate children who had sufficient mastery of spoken English to support English text reading as measured by the district test for second language proficiency. But in some schools,

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[1] In the California State University system, undergraduates who want to enter the multiple-subjects teaching credential programs typically major in Liberal Studies.

[2] The SFSU Financial Aid Office aided in the recruitment by mailing flyers to work-study eligible undergraduates who were Liberal Studies majors.

[3] This course satisfies the field experience prerequisite for students interested in applying to the multiple subjects teacher credential program.

particularly those with large Latino populations, children who were limited-English proficient were nominated. Although teachers were asked to use standardized tests scores as the criterion for nominating children for tutoring, it appears that standardized test scores were not always used as the criterion.[4]

After receiving parental consent to participate in the project, the undergraduates were assigned children to tutor. Specifically, the university personnel assigned each tutor to a particular school. Then the site mentor teacher at that school assigned each tutor 3 third-grade children. Each of these third-grade children was tutored 3 times per week. Tutoring took place during regular class time and was done on a one-to-one basis. In some cases, the tutoring took place inside the classroom, and in other cases, the child was tutored outside of the classroom Each tutoring session lasted 45 minutes. Thus, each undergraduate tutor had nine 45-minute tutoring sessions per week in a given school. Because some third grade students dropped out of the program, and others entered later in the school year, not all of these third graders were tutored for the entire academic year[5]. Roughly 165 children received tutoring.

Spring 2000 Support for the Tutors

The 3-unit university course for the tutors ended in December of 1999. In the Spring 2000 semester, the tutors were enrolled in a 1-unit university course, which met once a month These reading workshops, which were follow-up sessions to the university course, were lead by

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[4] A number of children who were nominated for tutoring did not have any standardized test scores available from the end of the second grade, most likely because (a) they were new to the district, or (b) they were limited English proficient, or (c) they were receiving special education services.

[5] Although some children dropped out of the program, this does not mean that they left the America Reads Project because they were dissatisfied with it. A number of students dropped out of the program because they moved to a different location.

Professor Patricia Gallagher. The tutors also attended school site meetings at their respective school sites. These meetings were lead by the school site mentors. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the tutors with a forum to discuss their tutoring experience as well as to discuss teaching as a profession.

The SFSU Team Leaders

The 12 SFSU team leaders enrolled in a 1-unit course for both the Fall semester, and met monthly in the Spring semester. The course was taught by Ms. Jean Rocchio, an instructor in the Department of Elementary Education at SFSU. For the Spring semester, the team leaders met on a monthly basis, but did not receive university credit for these meetings. These meetings were lead by Ms. Rocchio.

School Site Mentor Meetings

The 11 school site mentors met together as a group several times. These meetings were lead by Professor Hurtado, and were devoted to a number of issues. During these meetings, the site mentors engaged in program planning; learned about community service learning; and provided feedback about the program.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS: THE TUTORS AND TEAM LEADERS

1. SFSU Tutor Demographics

Demographic data were collected from the undergraduates in October of 1999 during one of the reading classes. Forty-six of the SFSU students were present that day.

A summary of the undergraduate demographics is presented in Table 1. The majority of tutors were first year tutors (72%). Most were either Asian/Asian American (28%) or European

American (26%). Most tutors were women (78%), and most were either in their junior or senior year of college (61%). On average, tutors were 26 years old. When asked what their first choice of a career was, the majority indicated teaching (74%).

2. SFSU Tutors' Evaluations of Undergraduate EED 646 Reading Course

At the end of the Fall 1999 course, the tutors were given a course evaluation questionnaire to complete. The instrument consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Only 28 of the tutors were present on the day of the evaluation.

Closed-ended questions. A summary of tutors' course ratings can be found in Table 2. In this questionnaire, tutors were first presented with a series of 5-point Likert scale items, with "1" indicating a positive rating for an item, and "5" indicating a negative rating for an item. The median Likert scale item mean was 1.51, which indicates that the tutors were generally quite favorable towards the course. In fact, the tutors' ratings in the third year were much higher than the tutors' ratings in the first and second years of the project.

Tutors were also asked to provide an overall rating of the course quality. Over 86% of the students rating the course quality as either "Excellent" or "Very Good". This indicates a marked improvement over the first year of the project, where only 40% of the tutors gave a rating of "Excellent" or "Very Good".

Open-ended questions. The tutors were asked to write comments about the strengths of the course and how to improve the course. In terms of the strengths of the course, two main themes emerged. First, a number of tutors discussed the value of learning specific strategies to use while tutoring. For example:

"The main strengths I have found coming from the class are all the specific strategies taught that go hand in hand with what we're doing hands on, out in the field ..."

"They give me plenty of ideas for tutoring the students. Different activities like the following: poems, ABC books, silly sentences"

Second, a number of tutors discussed the opportunity to share their tutoring experience with their peers and the instructor as a course strength. Here is an example that illustrate this theme:

"The main strength would be all the tutors have a place where they are able to share their experiences. Among my peers I have learned invaluable lessons. I feel right about what I am doing by listening to other's success, as well as unsuccessful stories of their tutoring sessions"

In terms of the weaknesses of the course and ways to improve it, two themes also arose. First, a number of tutors suggested that the reading class should meet for fewer hours per week:

"It could be made shorter (two hours max or less). This would allow for better focus and better quality of time spent"

"I think that although the information is extremely valuable, it can be taught in shorter periods of time. 3 hours a week tends to be more (too much) than enough time and maybe should be reduced to 2 to 1.5 hours so that more time can be put in at the schools with the children".

Second, several tutors believed that the course could be improved by discussing more strategies and methods to use when tutoring. The following is an illustrative comment:

"Even more explicit examples of tutoring techniques, maybe? More instruction/practice on creating lesson plans, units of study."

In the first two years of the project, a number of tutors commented about the need to improve organization. In the third year, no students made comments about disorganization, indicating a major change in tutors' perceptions.

3. SFSU Tutors' End-of-Year Evaluation of the America Reads Project

At the end of the academic year, tutors were given a questionnaire to evaluate their experience in the America Reads Project.[6] The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and

[6] The tutors were also given a mid-year evaluation to complete. The tutors' responses to this questionnaire were used for formative evaluation purposes, and are not summarized here.

open-ended questions. The questionnaire was given during the final reading class at the SFSU campus.

Closed-ended questions. A summary of the undergraduates' summative ratings of the America Reads Project can be found in Table 3. In terms of aspects of the program which they rated highly, all of the tutors thought that the America Reads Project was a valuable community service learning experience for them in terms of their development as a future teacher. In terms of overall leadership, the tutors gave high ratings regarding the accessibility of the classroom teachers, the overall helpfulness of the classroom teachers, and the overall leadership skills of the Project Director, Professor Rosemary Hurtado. Tutors were asked about the impact they thought they had on the tutees. Over two-thirds of the tutors said they saw "a lot" of progress in terms of improving the tutees' reading ability, and two-thirds said they saw "a lot" of progress in improving the tutees' attitudes towards reading.

In terms of aspects of the program which they gave lower ratings, the tutors' evaluations of their site mentor teachers were mixed (See question 2)—over one-third of them gave low ratings to the communication ad coordination between themselves and the school site mentor teachers. The tutors also gave mixed reviews with respect to the helpfulness of the team meetings that they had at their elementary school site with their school site mentor teachers (see Question 11).

Open-ended questions. The tutors were asked to comment about (a) the strengths of the America Reads Project, and (b) suggestions for how to improve the project. In terms of the strengths of the program, the tutors offered a diversity of responses, and no major themes arose.

Several tutors talked about the value of the discussion among the tutors. For example, one tutor said:

"The ideas shared with one another at the EED sessions have been of much help and use"

In terms program weaknesses and ways to improve it, again no major themes arose. A few tutors discussed the need for more practical training. (This is in marked contrast to the first year of the program, where many tutors described organizational problems)

"There should be a little more time devoted towards the development of tutoring techniques"
"I think the class needs to have more information on how to assess the students and then go about planning instruction for them based on the assessment".

4. SFSU Team Leaders' Ratings of the Fall 1999 Seminar

At the end of the Fall 1999 semester, the SFSU team leaders were given an evaluation form to complete regarding their experiences in the 1-unit seminar they had taken with Jean Rocchio.

Closed-ended questions. A summary of the team leaders' course ratings can be found in Table 4. In this questionnaire, the team leaders were first presented with a series of 5-point Likert scale items, with "1" indicating a positive rating for an item, and "5" indicating a negative rating for an item. The median Likert scale item mean was 1.55, which indicates that the team leaders were generally quite favorable towards the seminar. The team leaders gave particularly high ratings to the instructor's encouragement of student participation and to the instructor's ability to express herself clearly (see Questions 3 and 4). Over 80% of the team leaders rated the overall quality of the course as "Very Good" to Excellent".

Open-ended questions. In terms of strengths, almost all of the team leaders found the communication with their peers to be quite valuable.

5. SFSU Team Leaders' End-of-Year Evaluation of the America Reads Project

At the end of the academic year, the SFSU team leaders were given a questionnaire to evaluate their experience in the America Reads Project. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was given during the final seminar at the SFSU campus.

Closed-ended questions. A summary of the team leaders' responses to the closed-ended questions can be found in Table 5. The team leaders' evaluation of the project was generally favorable, particularly in terms of the overall leadership skills of Professor Rosemary Hurtado (see Question 6). Team leaders also gave high ratings to the communication and coordination between the school site mentor and the classroom teachers at their school (see Question 3) and to the accessibility and helpfulness of the site mentor teachers (see Questions 4 and 5). Over 80% of the team leaders indicated that the Project encouraged them to become a schoolteacher.

In terms of areas in need of possible improvement, the team leaders gave mixed ratings to the communication and coordination between the school site mentor and university personnel (see Question 2).

Open-ended questions. In terms of the strengths of the program, no major theme arose. Like the tutors, two of the team leaders discussed the value of sharing problems with other students and the value of communication among the tutors:

> *"The sharing of problems and experiences among tutors was very helpful (more emphasis of this sort from team leaders would be helpful)"*

In terms of ways in which the program could be improved, three team leaders indicated that they could use more resources, materials, workbooks, and so forth. As one team leader said

"I would have liked more structure; more specified activities. I used the third grade workbooks you can buy in toy stores for working on vowel combinations, etc."

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS OF THE SITE MENTOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

The classroom teachers, site mentor teachers, and principals all received questionnaires to complete at the end of the academic year regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of the America Reads Project.[7] The questionnaires consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

2. Site Mentor Teachers' Evaluation of the America Reads Project

Closed-ended questions. Site mentor teachers' were given end-of-year questionnaires to complete concerning their evaluation of the America Reads Project. An analysis of the closed-ended questions can be found in Table 6. Overall, the site mentor teachers were quite favorable towards the program. They gave particularly high ratings to the flexibility of the tutors (Question 3) and the flexibility of the team leaders (Question 7). Moreover, over 60% of them rated the overall quality of the project as "Excellent" or "Very Good".

One potentially problematic issue arose in terms of the site mentor teachers' evaluation of the communication between themselves and the university personnel (see Question 9), where over half of the teachers rated this as "Good".

Open-ended questions. The site mentor teachers were asked to write comments about (a) the strengths of the America Reads Project and (b) suggestions for how to improve the project. In

[7] The site mentor teachers also received a mid-year evaluation form to complete. Their responses to this mid-year evaluation were used for formative evaluation purposes, and are not summarized in this report.

terms of program strengths, three main themes emerged. First, three teachers discussed the quality of the training that the tutors received. For example, one teacher stated:

> *"The training guidelines and suggested activities provide a balanced literacy program for 3rd graders".*

Second, three teachers commented on the quality of the tutors and their commitment:

> *"The commitment of most tutors".*
>
> *"Good tutor candidates".*

Finally, three teachers commented on the value of the one-to-one relationships and the rapport that developed between the tutors and the children.

In terms of ways in which the program could be improved, one major theme emerged. Four teachers discussed the importance of having students make a one-year commitment. Some teachers thought that the tutors lost interest over the course of the year, while others were more concerned with tutors who left before the one-year period ended:

> *"'# 1 Make sure the tutors commit to working the full year!'"*
>
> *"Do not employ tutors who plan to leave during the year"*
>
> *"Make sure tutors will make the full year commitment—the children are very disappointed when their tutor disappears without saying goodbye".*

3. Principals' Evaluation of the America Reads Project

Closed-ended questions. The principals were mailed an evaluation form at the end of the academic year. A summary of the principals' responses to this questionnaire can be found in Table 7. In general, the principals were mostly positive in terms of their evaluation of the America Reads Project—72% of the principals rating the overall quality of the program as either "Very Good" or "Excellent". In terms of positive aspects of the program, the principals gave particularly favorable ratings to the performance of the SFSU tutors and team leaders.

In terms of more problematic aspects of the project, the principals gave lower ratings to organization and communication issues between the university and their elementary schools (See questions 9 to 11).

Open-ended questions. The principals were asked to write comments on (a) the strengths of the America Reads Project and (c) suggestions for how to improve the project. In terms of the strengths of the program, the main theme that arose was the value of the 1:1 relationships. As one principal stated:

> *"The one-on-one time to build positive relationships and to individualize instruction to best meet students' reading needs".*

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS: THE CHILDREN BEING TUTORED

This section of the report, which focuses on the tutees, is divided into three parts. First, the tutee demographics will be presented. Second, the impact of the tutoring on the children's attitudes towards reading will be reviewed. Third, the impact of the tutoring on the children's reading achievement will be considered.

Tutee Demographics

Tutee demographics were collected at the beginning of the academic year.

Tutee demographics are presented in Table 8. The majority of children being tutored were boys (53%). Over 70% were either African American or Latino. Less than half (39%) were monolingual English speakers, and over 61% were either LEP or NEP. In comparison to the previous year, this represents an increase in the number of LEP and NEP children being tutored.

Tutees Attitudes towards Reading

The America Reads staff Project developed an instrument to measure tutees' attitudes towards reading. The instrument consists of 10 questions. These questions were read to the

tutees by their tutors during the one-on-one tutoring sessions. Pretest (Fall 1999) and posttest (Spring 2000) data were collected. The results are presented in Table 9.

No measurable differences were found from the beginning of the year to the end of the year for 9 of the 10 questions, indicating that there was little measurable attitude change. The only area where there was a statistically significant attitude change was in tutees' response to the question "Do your classmates think you are a good reader?" Here, 44% of the tutees said "Yes" for the pretest, whereas only 29% of the tutees said "Yes" on the posttest, indicating a negative effect.

Achievement Data for the Tutees

Two dimensions of reading were measured--reading comprehension and word recognition. In terms of reading comprehension, two measures were used. The first reading comprehension test was a nationally-normed standardized test, namely the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9). The second reading comprehension test was the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory for the Classroom, 3rd Edition. In terms of word recognition, a simple sight-word recognition test was used called the San Diego Quick Assessment Word Recognition test. All of these tests were collected on a pretest-posttest basis. Only children who had been in the program for at least 6 months and who had received tutoring at least twice a week were tested.

Consider first the results of the reading comprehension tests.

1. Reading Comprehension: The Stanford Achievement Test (STAR-9)

The children were tested at the end of the second grade, and again at the end of the third grade using the Stanford Achievement Test (STAR-9). This standardized test is required by the State of California, and is given to all children. For these analyses, only children who had valid

STAR-9 for both the end of second grade (Spring 1999—the "pretest") and the end of third grade (Spring 2000—the "posttest") were considered. The goal was to see if their standardized reading test scores improved from the end of second grade to the end of third grade.

Results are presented in Table 10. Here, normal-curve equivalent scores were compared from pretest to posttest for four scales, namely Total Reading, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Spelling. No statistically significant difference was found from pretest to posttest for any of these scales.

2. Reading Comprehension: The Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory

Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory for the Classroom (N = 108). Four graded reading passages were given to the tutees by the team leaders to assess their reading comprehension. These passages, and the corresponding scoring system, were taken from the *Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory for the Classroom, 3rd Edition.* In particular, the children were given two second grade reading passage (one expository passage and one narrative passage), and two third grade reading passages (one expository passage and one narrative passage). For each passage, the tutee was asked to read the story silently, and then read the story again aloud. Then the tutee was asked to retell the story. For each passage, the tester had a list of questions/answers relevant to the story. The tester checked the answers that were mentioned by the tutee during the retelling. Then for aspects of the story that the tutee may have missed, the tester asked specific questions. The total number of questions missed was then counted. Based upon this total, a tutee's response to a given passage was rated as "Easy", "Adequate", or "Too Hard". A tutee was considered to be at instructional level if he or she was given a rating of "Easy" or "Adequate".

A summary of student performance on these reading passages is presented in Table 11. For all four passages, students' improvement from pretest to posttest was statistically significant. For the third grade *narrative* passage, 40% were considered to be at instructional level for the pretest, whereas 73% were considered to be at instructional level for the posttest. For the third grade *expository* passage, only 19% were considered to be at instructional level for the pretest, whereas 47% were considered to be at instructional level for the posttest.

3. Word Recognition: The San Diego Quick Assessment (N = 112)

The San Diego Quick Assessment Word Recognition test was used as a quick measure of sight word recognition. This test consists of 8 lists of 10 words. Each list corresponds to a reading level: (1) primer, (2) first grade, (3) second grade, (4) third grade, and (5) fourth grade, (6) fifth grade, (7) sixth grade, and (8) seventh grade. For this test, which was individually-administered by the team leaders, a tutee was shown the list of 10 pre-primer words, and asked to read them. The tester marked the number of words correctly identified in this list. If a child made five or more errors in this list, no further lists were given to the child to read. If the child made four or fewer errors in the list, then the child was given the primer list. The number of words correctly identified was again counted. If the child made four or fewer errors on the list, then he or she was given the next list. This procedure could continue until all lists were read.

The results of this test are presented in Table 12. The numbers in this table represent the percentage of children who could correctly identify at least 80% of the words in a given list. (Eighty percent was considered the cutoff for being at *instructional* level).

For the third grade word list, very few children (12%) could correctly identify at least 80% of the words on the list on the pretest. For the third grade posttest, nearly half of the

students (48%) could correctly identify at least 80% of the words on the list on the posttest. Thus, 36% more children could correctly identify at least 80% of the words on the third grade list by the posttest, and this gain was statistically significant. In fact the gain from pretest to posttest was statistically significant for all of the graded lists.

Summary and Conclusions

The America Reads Project has several goals, including

a. to provide undergraduates with a positive service learning experience in the field of education;
b. to increase undergraduates' awareness of the realities of teaching and their interest in entering the teaching profession;
c. to positively impact tutees' attitudes towards reading; and
d. to positively impact tutees' reading achievement.

To what extent did the project achieve its goals? The key stakeholders were generally quite positive towards the project, and most undergraduates indicated that the America Reads Project was a valuable service learning experience. In terms of the project's impact on the children's attitudes towards reading, no statistically significant differences were found. Finally, in terms of the project's impact on the children's reading performance, statistically significant increases were found on the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory, which measures reading comprehension, and the San Diego Word Recognition Test. But no statistically significant increases were found on any of the STAR-9 measures. Because there was no control group in the design of the study, the results regarding the impact on children's reading is therefore tentative.

Table 1

Tutor Demographics (Fall 1999)
(N = 46)

Number of Years in Project	
First Year	72%
Second year	24%
Third year	4%
Ethnicity	**Percent**
Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander	28%
European American/White	26%
Latino/Hispanic	20%
Other	11%
African American/Black	15%
Native American/Alaskan Native	0%
Class standing this semester	
Freshman	4%
Sophomore	17%
Junior	26%
Senior	35%
Graduate Student	17%
Gender	
Male	22%
Female	78%
Age	Mean = 26.6
	SD = 8.3
Whether or not tutor participated in other volunteer or community service activities in the past year	
Yes	61%
No	39%
Tutors' first choice of a career	
Teaching	74%
Other	26%

Table 2

Tutors' Summative Ratings of the Fall 1999 Undergraduate Course

Statement	Mean**	SD	N
1. The course objectives are clear.	1.53	.74	28
2. The course objectives and course activities directly relate to each other.	1.50	.56	28
3. The instructor expresses herself clearly.	1.21	.42	28
4. The instructor encourages student participation and welcomes questions.	1.14	.45	28
5. The instructor makes the course material meaningful and communicates the significance of the subject.	1.42	.57	28
6. The instructor has command of the subject matter.	1.29	.46	28
7. The course contributes significantly to your knowledge about reading instruction theories.	1.64	.68	28
8. The course contributes significantly to your knowledge about the use of children's multicultural literature.	1.82	.77	28
9. The course contributes significantly to your ability to carry out shared reading and writing activities with the children whom you tutor.	1.32	.48	28
10. Overall, the course contributes significantly to your ability to tutor.	1.39	.50	28
11. The class is well organized.	1.70	.82	27
12. The assignments, examinations, and other forms of evaluation are relevant to the course.	1.52	.64	28

**Based upon a 5-point Likert scale, with 1=Strongly Agree and 5=Strongly Disagree

Students' Overall Rating of Course Quality (N =28)

Excellent	43%
Very Good	43%
Good	11%
Fair	4%
Poor	0%

Table 3

Tutors' End-of-Year Evaluation of the America Reads Project

	Percent					
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N
Organization/Communication						
1. The communication and coordination between you and your school site mentor.	47%	20%	7%	20%	7%	15
2. The communication and coordination between your school site mentor and the university personnel.	21%	29%	14%	36%	0%	14
3. The communication and coordination between your school site mentor and the classroom teachers at your school site.	31%	31%	23%	15%	0%	13
Overall Leadership						
4. The overall accessibility of the classroom teacher(s) of the children you tutored.	60%	20%	13%	7%	0%	15
5. The overall helpfulness of the classroom teacher(s) of the children you tutored.	53%	20%	20%	7%	0%	15
6. The overall accessibility of the site mentor teacher at your school site.	40%	20%	20%	13%	7%	15
7. The overall helpfulness of the site mentor teacher at your school site.	43%	21%	14%	14%	7%	14
8. The overall leadership skills of the Project Director, Dr. Rosemary Hurtado.	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	15
Classes, Workshops, and Other Activities						
9. Please rate the overall helpfulness of the reading class (EED 646) which you took during the Fall 1998 semester.	46%	46%	9%	0%	0%	11
10. Please rate the overall helpfulness of the three reading workshops you attended this semester (Spring 1999) with Professor Norton.	31%	31%	15%	23%	0%	13
11. Please rate the overall helpfulness of the team meetings you had at your school site with your school site mentor and the other tutors.	21%	21%	29%	14%	14%	14
Overall Evaluation						
12. How would you rate the overall quality of the America Reads Project as a community service learning experience?	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%	15

Table 3 (Continued)

Question	Percent
13. "Do you believe that you made significant progress with the children you tutored in terms of improving their reading?" (N = 15)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	67%
Yes, I saw some progress	33%
No, I saw no change	0%
14. "Do you believe that you made significant progress with the children you tutored in terms of improving their attitudes towards reading?" (N = 15)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	67%
Yes, I saw some progress	33%
No, I saw no change	0%
15. "Do you believe that you made significant progress with the children you tutored in terms of developing personal relationships with them?" (N = 15)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	87%
Yes, I saw some progress	13%
No, I saw no change	0%
16. Did the America Reads Project experience encourage you or discourage you from becoming a teacher? (N = 15)	
The experience encouraged me to become a teacher	93%
The experience discouraged me to become a teacher	7%
17. Overall, was tutoring a valuable learning experience for you in terms of your development as a future teacher? (N = 15)	
Yes, it was very valuable	100%
Yes, it was somewhat valuable	0%
No, it was not valuable	0%

Table 4

SFSU Team Leaders' Summative Ratings of the Fall 1999 Seminar

Statement	Mean**	SD	N
1. The course objectives are clear.	1.55	.52	11
2. The course objectives and course activities directly relate to each other.	1.55	.52	11
3. The instructor expresses herself clearly.	1.27	.47	11
4. The instructor encourages student participation and welcomes questions.	1.18	.40	11
5. The instructor makes the course material meaningful and communicates the significance of the subject.	1.55	.69	11
6. The instructor has command of the subject matter.	1.55	.52	11
7. The course contributes significantly to your leadership abilities.	1.55	.52	11
8. The course contributes significantly to your ability to carry out problem solving strategies with the first year tutors.	1.91	.54	11
9. The class is well organized.	1.82	.87	11
10. The assignments, examinations, and other forms of evaluation are relevant relevant to the course.	1.91	.83	11

**Based upon a 5-point Likert scale, with 1=Strongly Agree and 5=Strongly Disagree.

Students' Overall Rating of Course Quality (N =11)

Excellent	18%
Very Good	64%
Good	18%
Fair	0%
Poor	0%

Table 5

Team Leaders' End-of-Year Evaluation of the America Reads Project

	Percent					
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N
Organization/Communication						
1 The communication and coordination between you and your school site mentor	40%	0%	40%	0%	20%	5
2 The communication and coordination between your school site mentor and the university personnel	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	5
3 The communication and coordination between your school site mentor and the classroom teachers at your school site.	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%	5
Overall Leadership						
4 The overall accessibility of the site mentor teacher at your school site.	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%	5
5 The overall helpfulness of the site mentor teacher at your school site.	40%	40%	0%	0%	20%	5
6 The overall leadership skills of the Project Director, Dr. Rosemary Hurtado.	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%	5
Classes, Workshops, and Other Activities						
7 Please rate the overall helpfulness of the group meetings with Jean Rocchio.	20%	40%	20%	20%	0%	5
Overall Evaluation						
8 How would you rate the overall quality of the America Reads Project as a community service learning experience?	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	5

Table 5 (Continued)

The Leadership Experience

9. Overall, was being a team leader a valuable learning experience for you in terms of developing your leadership skills? (N = 5)

Yes, it was very valuable	60%
Yes, it was somewhat valuable	40%
-No, it was not valuable	0%

10. Did the America Reads Project experience encourage you or discourage you from becoming a teacher? (N = 15)

The experience encouraged me to become a teacher	80%
The experience discouraged me to become a teacher	20%

11. Overall, was tutoring a valuable learning experience for you in terms of your development as a future teacher? (N = 15)

Yes, it was very valuable	60%
Yes, it was somewhat valuable	40%
No, it was not valuable	0%

Table 6

Site Mentor Teachers' End-of-Year Evaluation of the America Reads Project

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N
Tutors						
1. The attendance and punctuality of the tutors.	11%	33%	33%	0%	22%	9
2. The effort and commitment of the tutors.	33%	33%	22%	11%	0%	9
3. The flexibility of the tutors.	44%	44%	11%	0%	0%	9
4. The tutors' ability to get along with the teachers at their school site.	44%	33%	22%	0%	0%	9
Undergraduate Team Leaders						
5. The attendance and punctuality of the team leader(s).	44%	11%	33%	0%	11%	9
6. The effort and commitment of the team leader(s).	44%	11%	33%	0%	11%	9
7. The flexibility of the team leader(s).	67%	22%	0%	11%	0%	9
8. The overall helpfulness of the team leader(s).	56%	22%	11%	0%	11%	9
Organization/Communication						
9. The communication between you and university personnel associated with the America Reads Project.	33%	11%	56%	0%	0%	9
10. The communication between you and the classroom teachers associated with the America Reads Project at your school site.	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	8
11. The communication between you and the university liaison, Dr. Jean Rocchio.	25%	63%	0%	13%	0%	8
12. The overall leadership skills of the Project Director, Dr. Rosemary Hurtado.	50%	13%	13%	25%	0%	8
Overall Evaluation						
13. How would you rate the overall quality of the America Reads Project as a community service learning experience for the tutors?	50%	13%	13%	13%	13%	8

Table 6 (continued)

Question	Percent
14 "Do you believe that the tutors made significant progress with the children they tutored in terms of improving their reading?" (N = 9)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	33%
Yes, I saw some progress	67%
No, I saw no change	0%
I can't judge	0%
15 "Do you believe that the tutors made significant progress with the children they tutored in terms of improving their attitudes towards reading?" (N = 9)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	56%
Yes, I saw some progress	44%
No, I saw no change	0%
I can't judge	0%
16 "Do you believe that the tutors made significant progress with the children they tutored in terms of developing personal relationships with them?" (N = 9)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	44%
Yes, I saw some progress	44%
No, I saw no change	11%
I can't judge	0%

Table 7

Principals' End-of-Year Evaluation of the America Reads Project

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N
Tutors						
1. The attendance and punctuality of the tutors	14%	29%	43%	14%	0%	7
2. The effort and commitment of the tutors	29%	43%	14%	14%	0%	7
3. The flexibility of the tutors	29%	29%	14%	29%	0%	7
4. The tutors' ability to get along with the teachers at their school site	14%	57%	29%	0%	0%	7
Undergraduate Team Leaders						
5. The attendance and punctuality of the team leader(s)	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	4
6. The effort and commitment of the team leader(s)	50%	0%	25%	25%	0%	4
7. The flexibility of the team leader(s)	50%	25%	0%	0%	25%	4
8. The overall helpfulness of the team leader(s)	50%	25%	0%	0%	25%	4
Organization/Communication						
9. The communication between you and the university liaison, Dr. Jean Rocchio	0%	25%	25%	50%	0%	4
10. The communication between you and the Project Director, Dr. Rosemary Hurtado	17%	33%	50%	0%	0%	6
11. The overall leadership skills of the Project Director, Dr. Rosemary Hurtado	29%	14%	57%	0%	0%	7
Overall Evaluation						
12. How would you rate the overall quality of the America Reads Project as a community service learning experience for the tutors?	43%	29%	29%	0%	0%	7

Table 7 (continued)

Question	Percent
14 "Do you believe that the tutors made significant progress with the children they tutored in terms of improving their reading?" (N = 7)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	57%
Yes, I saw some progress	43%
No, I saw no change	0%
I can't judge	0%
15 "Do you believe that the tutors made significant progress with the children they tutored in terms of improving their attitudes towards reading?" (N = 7)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	57%
Yes, I saw some progress	43%
No, I saw no change	0%
I can't judge	0%
16 "Do you believe that the tutors made significant progress with the children they tutored in terms of developing personal relationships with them?" (N = 7)	
Yes, I saw a lot of progress	43%
Yes, I saw some progress	57%
No, I saw no change	0%
I can't judge	0%

Table 8

Tutee Demographics

Gender (N = 145)	**Percent**
Male	53%
Female	47%

Ethnicity (N = 139)	**Percent**
Latino/Hispanic	49%
African American/Black	24%
Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander	10%
Other	13%
European American/White	4%
Native American/Alaskan Native	0%

Languages Spoken (N=139)	**Percent**
English Only	39%
Speaks a language other than or in addition to English	61%

Language Proficiency (N=76)	**Percent**
Non-English Proficient (NEP)	7%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	61%
Fully English Proficient (FEP)	33%

Table 9

Analysis of Tutees' Attitudes Towards Reading (N = 101)

	Percent Saying "Yes"		
	Pretest	Posttest	Change
1. Do you think you are a good reader?	57%	72%	--
2. Do you like to read aloud?	57%	53%	--
3. Do you like to read at home?	82%	81%	--
4. Do you enjoy reading?	86%	82%	--
5. Do you feel comfortable when you read?	73%	79%	--
6a. Does your teacher think you are a good reader?	47%	56%	--
6b. Does your teacher like to listen to you read?	59%	68%	--
7. Do your classmates think you are a good reader?	44%	29%	*
8. Do your classmates like to listen to you read?	43%	40%	--
9. Do people in your family think you are a good reader?	84%	80%	--
10. Do people in your family like to listen to you read?	85%	75%	--

*Statistically significant at alpha = .05, two-tailed.

Table 10

A Comparison of End-of-Second Grade to End-of-Third Grade STAR-9 Reading Achievement Test NCE Scores for Students Enrolled in San Francisco Unified School District

	Pretest		Posttest		Gain			
Scale	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**p-value**
Total Reading (N = 47)	31.01	12.92	31.05	17.91	.04	13.07	.02	.99
Reading Comprehension (N = 48)	32.71	14.96	35.16	16.41	2.45	16.00	1.06	.29
Reading Vocabulary (N = 48)	28.36	18.76	27.95	19.19	-.42	16.66	-.17	.86
Spelling (N = 48)	34.85	18.27	37.21	18.14	2.36	14.24	1.15	.26

Note: No statistically significant differences were found from pretest to posttest.

Table 11

Percent of Students at or above Instructional Level for the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory (N = 108)

	Pretest Percent	Posttest Percent	Change
Passage 1: Grade 2 (Narrative)	72%	88%	*
Passage 2: Grade 2 (Expository)	23%	50%	*
Passage 3: Grade 3 (Narrative)	40%	73%	*
Passage 4: Grade 3 (Expository)	19%	47%	*

*Significant at alpha = .05, two tailed, based upon the McNemar Test of correlated proportions

Table 12

Percent of Students at Instructional Level on the San Diego Word Recognition Test (N = 112)

Grade Level of List	Percent of Students at Instructional Level: Pretest	Posttest	Difference
1. Primer	93%	97%	--
2. Grade 1	70%	96%	*
3. Grade 2	42%	80%	*
4. Grade 3	12%	48%	*
5. Grade 4	5%	28%	*
6. Grade 5	2%	12%	*
7. Grade 6	1%	7%	*
8. Grade 7	0%	8%	*

Note: A child was considered "at instructional level" if he or she correctly identified 80% or more of the words in a given list.

* Significant at alpha = .05, two tailed, based upon the McNemar test for correlated proportions